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(From left) Silver medalist Kidambi Srikanth, gold medalist Loh Kean Yew, bronze medalists Anders Antonsen and Lakshya Sen at the World Championships in Huelva on Sunday | AP | P15

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SRIKANTH GETS LOH-CUT, ENDS WORLDS WITH HISTORIC SILVER

First Indian man to feature in final of badminton Worlds, Kidambi Srikanth goes down to Singapore's Loh Kean Yew

FORMER WORLD NO 1 BACK FOR GOOD?

Srikanth's resurgence in 2021 could yet be one of the sporting stories of the year. After failing to qualify for the Olympics, the former World No 1 has strung together impressive performances. He's No 3 in the 'Race to Guangzhou' standings. Free of injuries, his big weapons, net play and the jump smash, are working. It's now a question of consistency.

BIG 2022 SEASON AWAITS 28-YEAR-OLD

- With the Asian and Commonwealth Games scheduled for 2022, it's a big year for the 28-year-old from Andhra. He will likely begin the year at the India Open in New Delhi
- Coach Mulyo Handoyo, who oversaw his rapid development in 2017, will also be back with him in what will be a further positive

2015

AN INDIAN HAS BEEN IN THE FINAL OF THE WORLDS EVERY YEAR SINCE 2015

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

Shivaji statue desecration: 7 held in B'luru

5 arrested in B'gavi for damaging public property

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru, Belagavi

IN all, 12 miscreants – seven in Bengaluru and five in Belagavi -- were arrested in connection with the desecration of statues and vandalising public property over the last three days.

The Sadashivanagar police in Bengaluru arrested seven members of a pro-Kannada organisation for blackening the statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji near Bashyam Circle on Friday morning. Investigations revealed that the accused resorted to the act to retaliate against the burning of a Kannada flag in Kolhapur of Maharashtra on Tuesday.

In Belagavi, five miscreants were arrested late on Saturday night for stone-throwing and vandalising public property. Over the last two days, Belagavi was tense after the Bengaluru incident and some miscreants had vandalised a statue of Sangolli Rayanna in retaliation. Mobs had gone on the rampage and attacked government vehicles and KSRTC buses. Till now, 32 miscreants have been arrested, while tight police bandobast continues in sensitive areas of the city. As a precautionary measure, prohibitory orders under Section 144 of CrPC too have been extended till December 22.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Law and order) Dr Vikram Amte said, "Anyone involved in violating the law and order by throwing stones and insulting statues of personalities will be arrested. A special team has been formed to collect the CCTV footage and to find the accused behind these acts."

The Bengaluru incident had triggered protests by various Maratha outfits across the state. The Sadashivanagar police had registered a case of mischief and under provisions of the Prevention of Damage to Public Property Act.

CONTINUED ON: P4

Kannada activists perform milk abhisheka for the statue of Sangolli Rayanna in Belagavi on Sunday | EXPRESS

THOSE INSULTING ICONS WILL BE PUNISHED: CM

Requesting people to respect all historical icons, CM Basavaraj Bommai on Sunday warned all those insulting patriots and disturbing peace will be dealt with an iron hand. The warning comes on the heels of miscreants targeting statues of Sangolli Rayanna and Chhatrapati Shivaji in Belagavi and Bengaluru, respectively. P4

Devotees arrive to worship at the Golden Temple in Amritsar on Sunday | PTI

Second case of lynching at Sikh shrine in Punjab

HARPREET BAJWA @ Chandigarh

A day after a youth was beaten to death over an alleged attempt at sacrilege at the Golden Temple in Amritsar, a youth was on Sunday lynched at a gurdwara in the Kapurthala for allegedly disrespecting the *Nishan Sahib* (Sikh flag) there.

The second person was killed in the presence of a police team led by a Senior Superintendent of Police and two SPs. Assumed to be a migrant labourer, his alleged sacrilege was spotted around 4 am at a gurdwara in Nizampur village in Kapurthala district. Gurdwara caretaker Amarjit Singh said he saw the youth desecrating the Sikh flag but managed to hide as there was a power cut. He was caught after power was restored.

Enraged locals lodged him in a room in the gurdwara and demanded that he be questioned before them in the shrine itself instead of taking him to the police station. After heated arguments with representatives of Sikh outfits over the custody of the youth, the police broke into the room where the youth was lodged. Sikh activists followed and in the ensuing scuffle the mob attacked the youth with a sword. He later succumbed to his injuries in a hospital.

Senior Superintendent of Police, Kapurthala, Harkamalpreet Singh Khakh, said: "The mob broken open the window of the room where the suspect was lodged and assaulted him. Police personnel were also manhandled; three of them suffered injuries. As per initial investigation, sacrilege has not been established. It seems theft was the motive."

Inspector General of Police Gurinder Singh Dhillon said there was no visible evidence of sacrilege at the Kapurthala gurdwara.

CM Charanjit Singh Channi on Sunday visited Amritsar's Golden Temple, where the first incident happened. He saw an ulterior motive by some "inimical forces or agencies" ahead of the state polls early next year.

A special investigation team has been formed to probe the Amritsar case and submit a report in two days. The police registered FIRs in both cases, but there was no clarity on cases over the deaths. The identities of both victims, too, are yet to be established.

Kerala rocked by 2 political killings

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Alappuzha

KERALA'S Alappuzha district was shocked on Sunday by two political revenge killings within a span of 12 hours. One of the victims was a leader from the SDPI and the other from the BJP.

Around 8 pm on Saturday, Social Democratic Party of India's state secretary K S Shan, 39, died after a gang attacked him near Mannanchery. On Sunday morning, the BJP's OBC Morcha state secretary Renjith Sreenivasan, 40, was hacked to death in front of his mother at his home at Vellakinar. District police chief G Jaydev said the killings were connected, indicating that they could be retaliatory in nature. IGP Harshitha Attalluri, who is leading the probe into the violence, said as many as 50 people have been taken into custody, including SDPI and RSS activists and two who had arranged the vehicle for those who attacked Shan.

As the situation remained volatile, with both SDPI and RSS camps organising protest marches, District Collector A Alexander clamped Section 144 in the district on Sunday and Monday. The collector has also convened an all-party meet in Alappuzha on Monday. The murders evoked strong reactions, with Governor Arif Mohammed Khan saying that such political killings are a disgrace to Kerala and reflect the devaluation of democracy. Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan promised stern action by the police. P7

Pandemic effect: Minor girls now part of marriage market

> Girls are married at an early age for various reasons, including socio-economic conditions and cultural customs
> Fr Anthony Sebastian, former KSCPCR chairperson

BALA CHAUHAN @ Bengaluru

IN a disturbing disclosure, a minor girl from Jigalur village in Ballari district, during a recent public hearing, reportedly told the Karnataka State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (KSCPCR) that 21 minor girls in her village had got married in the past two years.

"The KSCPCR had called for a public hearing on the impact of the pandemic on children. It was during a hearing on November 6 in Ballari district that a Class 10 student said that as many as 21 minor girls in her village had got married since the beginning of the pandemic. We had constituted a task force, a fact-finding committee to gather information on the number of child marriages that have taken place; number of pregnancies resulting from these marriages and other relevant information. The Department of Women and Child Development is also looking into the issue," said former chairperson of KSCPCR Fr Anthony Sebastian. P7

EXPRESS READ

Typhoon deaths in Philippines cross 140

Manila: The toll in the strongest typhoon to batter the Philippines this year has reached at least 146, and the governor of an island province hard-hit by Typhoon Rai said there may be even greater devastation.

Pak LeT militant killed in encounter in Srinagar

Srinagar: A Pakistani Lashkar-e Taiba (LeT) militant, wanted in many terror cases in Jammu and Kashmir, was gunned down in an encounter with security forces in Harwan area here on Sunday, police said.

EXPRESS IMPACT

Re-exam for KPSC aspirants on Dec 29

ENS @ Bengaluru

THE candidates, who missed their general paper for the PWD assistant engineer posts on December 14 at centres in Bengaluru as Bidar-Yesvantpur and Mumbai-Sangolli Rayanna Railway Station Udyan Express trains ran late, will be able to appear for re-exam on December 29.

The Karnataka Public Service Commission (KPSC), which held the exams, issued an order on Sunday that all the other candidates who missed their morning paper due to train delays too will be allowed to sit for the re-exam. The KPSC had stated on December 15 that the opportunity would be given only to 500-plus aspirants who missed their exams in Kalaburagi due to massive delays suffered by two trains. *TNIE* had on December 18 highlighted the agony of nearly 200 students arriving from Kalyana Karnataka region to Bengaluru who missed their exams because of the same reason. The commission has asked these candidates to send photocopies of their hall tickets and train tickets to it before December 22.

NATIONWIDE	DEC 18	DEC 19
Fresh cases	7,145	7,081
Recoveries	8,706	7,469
Deaths	289	264

KARNATAKA	DEC 18	DEC 19
Fresh cases	335	300
Recoveries	286	279
Deaths	5	1

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